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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 536
By Cooper

A RESOLUTION to urge the United States Congress to enact legislation to ensure the provision of lifetime health care for military retirees over the age of 65 years.

WHEREAS, military retirees who have served their country honorably for 20 or more years constitute a significant part of the aging population in the great state of Tennessee and the United States; and

WHEREAS, these retirees were encouraged to make the United States armed forces a career, in part by the promise of no-cost lifetime health care for themselves and their spouses; and

WHEREAS, prior to the age of 65 years, these retirees and their spouses were provided health care services at military medical facilities or through other United States Department of Defense programs, but upon reaching the age of 65, they lost a significant portion of health care to which they were previously entitled; and

SJR0536

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WHEREAS, those medical benefits were eliminated in 1995 through federal legislation forcing those military retirees to pay out of their pocket for medical coverage from alternate sources; and

WHEREAS, for those who served our great state and the United States of America with sacrifice and valor in the armed forces, H.R. 2966 represents the fulfillment of the promise. The promise on the part of the nation to care for our military retirees in their time of need cannot be forgotten or abandoned. The move to bring austerity and fiscal responsibility to government spending cannot override the needs of military retirees who are in the twilight of their years, who now rely on us as we relied on them in our nation's time of need; and

WHEREAS, funding to care for the military retirees who suffered greatly must not be jeopardized. Military retirees deserve the same level of dedication they gave America in battle to preserve our way of life. To decrease our emotional commitment to these patriots through inadequate care is wrong. The military retiree did not ask what their country would do for them but rather what they could do for their country. The only thought the military retiree had throughout his or her long and arduous career was Duty--Honor--Country and the love of God. To continue to deny the promised health care funding and reduction in services and personal care represent a flawed approach to caring for men and women who have earned our lasting gratitude; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we memorialized the President, the United States Congress and the government of the United States to maintain their commitment to the American military retirees by providing lifetime health care for military retirees over the age of 65 years, to provide American military retirees and their spouses with the health care that they were promised and earned by enacting comprehensive legislation that affords the military retiree access to health care through the military treatment facilities or the military's network of health care providers,

and by enacting legislation opening the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program to uniformed service beneficiaries eligible for Medicare on the same basis and conditions that apply to federal employees.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be forwarded to President William Jefferson Clinton, Vice President Albert Gore, Jr., The Honorable Trent Lott, Speaker of the Senate; the Honorable Denny Hastert, Speaker of the House; and to each member of the Senate and each member of the Tennessee Congressional Delegation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.